

October 22, 2013

Testimony Against HB 4064 & HB 4532

Dear esteemed members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Court records belong to the public. Transparency, along with timely & easy access to records, are vital for a free & just society. While we all are in favor of the Internet and electronic filing to improve court operations both these bills need the following issues addressed before they are allowed to move forward.

- 1) The citizens of Michigan are taxed enough already ... that goes for imposed government fees as well. What happens to the money after it is collected? Will there be transparency for these imposed high fees that are simply red tape and ransom for records that already belong to the public?
- 2) Consistency and uniformity with transparency should be a given with the entire court system in Michigan. Instead, Michigan now has special courts that are mostly secret. Our court system has different fees charged for documents and records. How are these newly proposed fees calculated? Is there a consistent formula? Will there be audits to show that the money collected is not exorbitant and to show how exactly it's being used?
- 3) What will be the cost to the taxpayers for developing and implementing a uniform statewide e-filing system? Will it be a fiasco like the launch of the Obamacare exchanges... rife with cost overruns and hundreds of "glitches"? What will be the guarantee?

It is vital that this committee make these bills right before they are passed so foreseen negative outcomes can be avoided.

My Best,

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